DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
AND
FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY
CHEMICAL STOCKPILE EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PROGRAM
JOINT MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

October 27, 1998

SUBJECT: NATIONAL RESEARCH COUNCIL REPORT "Review of Acute Human - Toxicity Estimates for Selected Chemical - Warfare Agents, April 1998"

BACKGROUND: Recently, the National Research Council, at the request of the U.S. Army, completed a report that evaluates the existing toxicity estimates for the chemical warfare agents. For most of the chemical agents, the NRC has recommended that the Army lower its toxicity estimates for a male soldier in a battlefield scenario. The report specifically states that the results are "not to be used for civilians." This memorandum addresses the potential impact to the CSEPP.

DISCUSSION: The subject report is currently under review by the appropriate DoD/Army officials. Based on the preliminary findings, there is a possibility that the toxicity levels and estimates currently applied to the general population may be changed based on recent reviews and analysis completed by the National Research Council. However, until further technical data and information is available, is analyzed for its application to the general public, and is promulgated, the following guidelines have been established:

1. The Army's Chemical Demilitarization program must continue to press forward with the destruction of the chemical agent stockpile. This is the only acceptable way to reduce the existing stockpile risk, with the need only exacerbated by a potential lowering of toxicity levels to the general population.

2. Although the report clearly states that it does not apply to civilian communities, the CSEPP community will be involved in evaluating the technical data and, in coordination with the DoD/Army, determining the application to civilian populations and the CSEPP.

3. The Immediate Response Zone (IRZ), Protective Action Zone (PAZ) and Precautionary Zone (PZ) boundaries will not be affected by the potential changes, as they are established based on plume travel time, rather than on agent toxicity.

4. CSEPP jurisdictions should continue to use the most current approved data, until otherwise advised, in the decisionmaking process. The current downwind hazard prediction model (D2PC) used for CSEPP is designed to be conservative in nature, and does appear to accommodate the potential changes in toxicity in many situations.

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